

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2005**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
James R. Hart, At-Large
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Laurie Frost-Wilson, At-Large

STAFF PRESENT:

Barbara J. Lipa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Elizabeth Henri Stein McCartney, Management Analyst II, Planning Commission Office
Norma J. Duncan, Associate Clerk, Planning Commission Office
Wendy Jia, Transportation Planner, Department of Transportation (DOT)
David Kline, Senior Transportation Planner, DOT
Leonard Wolfenstein, Acting Chief, Planning Division, (DOT)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bruce Bennett, Citizen
Jody Bennett, Hunter Mill Defense League
Earl Flanagan, Transportation Advisory Commission, Mount Vernon District
Sally Ormsby, Citizen

Chairman Frank de la Fe convened the meeting at 7:32 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA.

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Chairman de la Fe asked for approval of the July 22, 2004, Transportation Committee minutes. Commissioner Byers MOVED APPROVAL OF THE JULY 22, 2004 MINUTES. Commissioner Koch seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous, with Commissioner Wilson absent from the meeting.

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Chairman de la Fe stated that the next agenda item would be an update on the proposed transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that if there was time they would also have quick updates on the Tysons Study and Dulles Rail.

Leonard Wolfenstein, Acting Chief, Planning Division, Department of Transportation (DOT), introduced his team, explaining that Wendy Jia, Transportation Planner, was managing the public meetings, public involvement, and public input and that David Klein, Senior Transportation Planner, was responsible for managing the consultant, Cambridge Systematics, who was doing the travel demand forecasting. He described their progress in the last six months and how they were managing the projects.

He said their core team, including Sterling Wheeler from the Department of Planning and Zoning, were meeting weekly. He emphasized that the new transportation plan map under development was GIS-based and had won an award from the GIS department.

Mr. Wolfenstein noted that the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) had taken an interest in the review and was currently meeting on this topic with the majority of their fall meetings also devoted to discussing the various policies. He acknowledged that the TAC had given the core team an excellent starting point for the continuing work of revamping the document. Their recommendations, he said, were to consolidate the number of policies, to be more concise and make the whole document more accessible. He said they would establish a team that represented different sections within their agency so that all staff could contribute and spread their expertise over different functions.

Mr. Wolfenstein explained that the travel demand forecasting contract was with Cambridge Systematics, and would use 2030 as their date projection for forecasting. He explained that travel demand forecasting was a tool for remodeling to help with decisions on the future of the transportation network. He referred to the eight scenarios listed in the handout (a copy of which is in the date file), describing how each was depicted, with a particular combination of land-use and transportation networks. With sixteen different scenario possibilities, he said they did not have resources to test each model and that only three out of eight would be tested. He noted that after public input they would be analyzed for presentation at two different sets of public meetings.

He described slides 5 and 6 of the handout and also detailed descriptions of the land-use scenarios which Fairfax County had projected to COG for use in Regional Forecasting.

In discussing the proposed scenarios on slide 6, Mr. Wolfenstein indicated that he did not know whether COG would officially adopt the scenarios within the study timeframe but DOT would have enough useable input. He said the Final Hybrid Land Use Future would be left outstanding and explained that the term “hybrid” could be confusing and they were open to a name change.

He elaborated about the steps taken to involve the public, citing notification by memorandum to the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission and the Transportation Advisory Commission prior to the public information news releases on September 6th. He also cited a newsletter and website which would include a comment form. He advised that they were not yet soliciting comments for another couple of months.

Mr. Wolfenstein mentioned that the Planning Commission staff had aided him by providing previous copies of APR nominations that had been submitted for transportation-related items, which had been mentioned by one of the Commissioners. He said they had been meeting with the Transportation Advisory Commission and that the Non-motorized Transportation Committee had expressed an interest to meet the next month. He added there were a couple other groups who were interested and that the staff was willing to speak with other community groups. Chairman de la Fe asked for an update whenever they received a request from a group, adding it was always easier to get input sooner in the process.

Commissioner Byers expressed concern about the public's ability to volunteer input at the beginning of the process instead of reacting to something already in place. He inquired as to how the public would know about the meetings in March. Mr. Wolfenstein responded that it was an issue they had faced in the fall as to whether to meet the public with a blank slate or try to bring some content with them. He cited modeling as their solution and that the forecasts would show choices and allow for public reaction on the different scenarios. He noted that they had prepared a Board Item for February 7th to announce the public meetings and would ask for input at that point.

Chairman de la Fe noted that the schedule and procedures were discussed in the July committee meeting and at the June Policy and Procedures Committee meeting when they were briefed on both the Transportation and Park plans. He said that one issue discussed previously was whether there would be nominations as in the APR process and they had decided not to use that formal process. He reminded the committee that there was general consensus to do a demand study or some modeling to present to the public as advice from experts. He said that staff should be clear at the public meetings that they were only providing background information rather than a draft of what the policy plan would be. Mr. Wolfenstein agreed and Ms. Jia stated that she would talk about that in further detail when they reached the public meeting process section.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lawrence regarding GIS-based maps, Mr. Klein explained that they were using the agreed-upon regional network developed by the Council of Governments as a base for projections for 2030, which would also be ultimately married with the land-use projections being developed by the Department of Planning and Zoning. He further noted that various types of households were being allocated to a zone system in the County and that within each of those 350 zones, a map could be created to show boundaries.

Commissioner Lawrence asked whether the public would have access to a concept map showing future growth and whether it would be easily understood. Mr. Klein asserted that some of that information was currently available as a layer accessible through the County GIS website and that they were engaged in refining a more detailed zone system for the Transportation Plan. As part of the analysis, he said, those zones would be reduced to about five-fold in detail, above and beyond the zone system to help with the traffic circulation part of the transportation analysis. He also said they would explain the process in a way that was not confusing. Commissioner Lawrence pointed out that his recent experience indicated that there were many highly educated and sophisticated citizens in Fairfax County regarding issues such as modeling and forecasting. Mr. Wolfenstein agreed but added there were also those who were not, so they would develop a

presentation set to use for those citizens and a set for the more sophisticated user. Ms. Jia referenced the GIS-based land use map developed by DPZ for small parcels. They all agreed that joining the two GIS-based maps would be helpful.

Commissioner Lawrence made a further inquiry as to how DOT would incorporate their work into the transportation approach as had been done with Traffic Demand Management (TDM) by Supervisor Smyth. Mr. Wolfenstein replied that the TDM had been mentioned in a couple of objectives within the policy developed by the TAC group. He said there should be some recommendations incorporated into the policy guidelines as an integral part that would have to be modified.

Commissioner Hart asked whether citizen nominations for map changes were part of the process beyond the comment form, whether they were permanently abolished, or would they be accepted at a different time. Ms. Jia replied that the on-line form specifically asked whether an individual's comments were related to policy or a map change. If to a map change, she stated, they required a specific map change question which would be accepted on-line, by fax, or by phone.

Commissioner Hart asked what happened to suggestions that staff did not like and whether it would come up at a public hearing. Mr. Wolfenstein envisioned that at the public hearing there would be a proposed map and that the staff report would contain every suggestion and its disposition. Commissioner Hart inquired as to what would happen if a Commissioner disagreed with staff regarding a particular suggestion. Chairman de la Fe interjected that suggestions by the public should still be in play whether accepted or not. Mr. Wolfenstein commented that they were bringing up a legal issue and Chairman de la Fe agreed that it was a very real concern. After further discussion, Mr. Wolfenstein suggested advertising a recommendation with a staff report stating that any suggestion could be approved by the Planning Commission and the Board, through the hearing process. Chairman de la Fe emphasized that the message had to be very explicit.

Mr. Earl Flanagan, TAC, Mount Vernon District, noted that each of the area planning districts had Supervisor-appointed task forces to review suggestions in the past and the communities were very used to that process and would be aware of rumors that public access would be dissolved. Chairman de la Fe agreed that the task forces should be able to see the proposed comments and effectively perform that overview function.

Mr. Flanagan further noted that some already had nominations independent of any model. There were drawings, he explained, that had perceived errors currently in the Comprehensive Plan. Chairman de la Fe commented that those would arrive individually in the current comment period.

Ms. Sally Ormsby stated her opinion that the public was not aware of the on-line information and asked what the time period was for submitting comments. Mr. Flanagan added that the website was not user-friendly as it took five clicks to get to that location on the County website. Mr. Wolfenstein replied that they were not actively soliciting comments until their February 7th

meeting with the Board. He said it would be advertised March 1 through March 12, 2005. He emphasized that public meetings were informational and that citizens would become aware through the process.

Ms. Jody Bennett suggested that on the soft advertisement, where the flow chart indicated the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors were on one side with the public on the other was sending the wrong message. She also commented that she had sent questions using the comment screen on the DOT website and had received answers, but that another individual had sent different questions and received the exact same answers. Chairman de la Fe suggested that when they revised the chart they should use Comments/Nominations in the field.

Ms. Jia noted their specific public outreach plan would present continuous opportunity for comments. She said they envisioned an open process, remarking that the nomination process had merits but was limited to a strict format. She said they would concentrate on introducing the public to reasons for the Plan update, how the process would work, and present some of the in-house preparations on the baselines, the trends already analyzed, how the County had achieved interstitial development, and what deficiencies were indicated from the data analysis into future years. Chairman de la Fe suggested that for the second round of meetings they schedule in Reston because of the transportation problems in that area.

Chairman de la Fe acknowledged there was not enough time to cover the remainder of the agenda items. After discussion it was decided that the Transportation Committee would meet again on February 23rd at 7:30 p.m.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.
Frank de la Fe, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Office of the Planning Commission of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Minutes by: Norma Duncan

Approved on: February 23, 2005

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission

Editor's Note: Additional public meetings have been scheduled in March (1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 12 & 14) in order to provide public opportunities for early comment throughout the County. A press release was issued to that effect, a copy of which is in the committee file.